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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 2448  
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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 5457  
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SUBJECT: MALDIVIAN FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES DONOR CONFERENCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVES WITH AMBASSADOR

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In a February 19 meeting in Colombo, the Ambassador and Maldivian Foreign Minister Ahmed Shaheed discussed several issues, including the upcoming Maldives donor conference March 28-29 and an Asian Climate Change initiative led by Maldives and East Timor within the framework of the Copenhagen Accord. End Summary.

Climate Change Initiatives

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¶2. (SBU) Shaheed reported that the GOM was working towards convincing other Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) members to follow its lead and associate to the Copenhagen Accord. He also noted that the GOM had spoken to Sri Lanka, which recently accepted the Accord, implying that the GOM's intervention influenced the decision. Shaheed stated that the GOM would protest recent AOSIS statements that were critical of the Accord and inconsistent with the GOM's views, though he did not specify which elements those were. Shaheed also previewed an Asian Climate Change initiative led by Maldives and East Timor within the framework of the Copenhagen Accord, to be launched in June 2010. The plan, he said, would be for all Asian countries (large as well as small) to commit to cutting carbon emissions below Copenhagen levels, and to set up a fund to support climate change initiatives. Shaheed said the aim was to establish this framework ahead of the next climate change summit in Mexico in December 2010.

Other Business

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¶3. (SBU) Shaheed thanked the Ambassador for U.S. support in the approval of an IMF loan of USD 92 million for Maldives, saying he was confident that the GOM would meet IMF policy reform targets with the passage of several tax bills now in parliament. Looking ahead, Shaheed said the GOM expected participation from about 40 countries at the donor conference scheduled for March 28 and 29. Shaheed said that the GOM intended to sign an agreement with Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) soon.

¶4. (SBU) Turning to politics, Shaheed reported that with three new members, the ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) was the single

biggest party in the 77-seat parliament, although it still did not have a majority vote. On the recent election of new leadership for the Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP), Shaheed said the vote, which installed new leaders, appeared to be a rejection of the established, long-standing DRP leaders who were closely associated with former President Gayoom. Shaheed reiterated that the GOM had no interest in arresting or prosecuting Gayoom and was primarily concerned with the recovery of stolen assets.

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